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FOLLOWING the recent demonstrations of joy in Paris over the signing of the Armistice, it is of interest to recall in the accompanying print by Félix Buhot, incidents relating to the last great Peace celebration of that city, the Fête Nationale, in 1878.

The two occasions, though forty years apart, are not without points of similarity, for then, as now, after struggle and disaster, France had rid herself of Prussian dominance, and enjoyed liberty. After years of war and internal unrest she felt worthy of herself, and tasted the happiness of renewed life. The Republican party had at last become a nation. France had obtained dearly purchased institutions; she saw her aspirations for justice almost satisfied. She was ready to resume her place in the world and forget past wounds, and the Fête Nationale was the sign and symbol of national reconciliation.

Paris, like a beautiful woman, not without a touch of the coquetry of her country, never looks so well as in festal array, and Parisians cannot forget in all their troubles, the graceful art which they alone of modern peoples seem to understand, of genuine national rejoicing and popular amusement. To the French temperament the outlet for emotions of gratitude and trust is rejoicing, and never had Paris given such exhibition of gladness, in commemorating political or military glories. She was on land and water a mixture of fairyland and Venice, and she decked herself from end to end with flags and banners.

The Festival marked the return of the French Capital to her place as the chosen and acknowledged Queen of European cities. Her merry-making, however, was tinged with a quietude inspired by a feeling of stability which the Fêtes of the Empire had lacked, though they had been witnessed and enjoyed by the whole of Europe. For she saw in the Republic the guardian of property, the harbinger of prosperity, the guarantee of continued liberty, and the only bulwark against revolution. But while her exuberance was the peaceful and appropriate consecration of a new Republic, Germany, a cycle behind in progress, was consolidating an Empire, and was organizing primarily for her policy of frightfulness which was to burst upon the world in the great War of 1914.—*Ed.*



Courtesy of Kennedy & Co.

LA FÊTE NATIONALE DU 30 JUIN, 1878  
AU BOULEVARD CLICHY

From the Print by Félix Buhot